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AUTHOR Gerber, Sterling
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ABSTRACT

A simple triadic model suggests that problems or circumstances come in three varieties: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Likewise, client style might be categorized by the same three labels. If the therapist can correctly identify the client's circumstance and style, then the approach can be chosen that seems most likely to produce the most efficient and effective solution. Responsive Therapy asserts two phases to therapy. The first, lasting up to three sessions, consists of employing what is referred to as universal therapy skills or Sequential Initiating, Tracking, and Enhancing skills. Once the circumstance and style are known, a soft contract is accomplished which restructures the counselor's role from empathic listener to that of an agent of active intervention. The Personal Commitment Model is a way of integrating several seemingly discordant positions into a larger, consonant one. Personal commitment is marked by behavior that has a unifying theme or style, but which is selectively variable. There is a well-developed internal system, but it is in process and open to selective modification. The personally committed person believes in choice, uses opportunities to choose, and accepts responsibility for the choices made. Teachers, therapists, and consultants have the opportunity to frame literature and history according to a multi-faceted truth and to promote self-responsibility among clients and students. The Personal Commitment model is one such vehicle by which to accomplish this goal. (LLL)

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Responsive Therapy and Personal Commitment: Integrative Models

Sterling Gerber
Eastern Washington University

This paper will review the experience of theoretical identity crisis, establish the polar dynamics of the either-or type of struggle, and suggest a superior model, one that incorporates both poles of the dichotomy into a broader frame, an integrative frame. It will explain a therapy model, Responsive Therapy, and a personality model, Personal Commitment, as examples of the integrative position.

Responsive Therapy (Gerber, 1986) is the culmination of a personal odyssey through the cognitive and philosophical catacombs of counseling. It also is a functional approach to serve, professionally and effectively, a variety of clients who find themselves in the counseling setting. For me, the quest started in graduate school where I was introduced to and enticed by various theoretical positions. In addition to the world views underlying behaviorism, psychoanalytic theory, Gestalt, Functionalism, and Structuralism, and the philosophical quagmire of realism, pragmatism, relativism, empiricism, and phenomenalism, I was particulary stranded on what seemed to be a trichotomous demand: be a directive therapist; be a non-directive therapist; be an eclectic therapist. These were three mutually exclusive options with proponents and detractors. To further compound the problem, my therapy education program included experiences wherein the theoretical position espoused was countered by inconsistent expectations; for example, the non-directive position that psychometric evaluations were at best a waste of time and quite possibly detrimental to the client offered in concert with intensive preparation in psychometrics. This set up a probable escape into eclecticism which was blocked by very strong prohibitions in the nature of, "Eclecticism is weak, devoid of consistent theory base, indefensible, a soft-headed compromise. Find something you can believe in!" I was bright enough to get the message that I would be stupid to embrace eclectism, and a stupid graduate student who turns into a stupid practitioner was a condition to be seriously avoided.

That this is a continuing problem is evidenced in articles by McBride and Martin (1990), Simon (1991), and Nance and Myers (1991). Harris (1991) comes to the defense of eclectic mental health counselors by invoking the empiricism test -- no consistant significant difference in research studies is interpreted as no superiority for one approach over another. An alternate plausible conclusion might point to no significant research or to imprecise measures of dependent variables. Were we to judge the efficacy of any kind of therapy solely on the results of tight research, we would bog down in trying to find meaningful evidence in our defense. I believed my mentors who may have stood on principle rather than weak empiricism, and I continue to believe them. The dilemma that was created for me appears to have afflicted successive generations of therapists. The labels change -- behaviorist/Gestalt, radical behaviorist/ cognitive-behaviorist/ Humanist, personality change/symptom removal, dyadic/systemic, and on and on -- but the dynamics remain. I hear counselors taking pride in being eclectic; I hear many apologetically calling themselves eclectic as though they are supposed to be something and are caught in a professional identity crisis; I hear some incorrectly label themselves as eclectic while operating out of a strong theoretical position.

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There are three premises to the position I take:

1. Knowing what you are doing and why you are doing it is a superior stance to intuitively doing whatever feels good from within a repertoire of counselor-comfort techniques.
2. The power of any given intervention comes from the theoretical context from which it springs.
3. Technique follows understanding.

The first premise asserts that a rational approach grounded in theory is superior to use of watered down techniques applied out of context and often in dynamic opposition to other techniques used contiguously by the same therapist on the same client. Two examples are here offered as case exhibits for the defense of theory-based practice [something to be taken much more seriously than to make puns about "Hyper-theoroidism" as does Harris (1991)].

The first example is of a practitioner working in an adolescent care facility, one catering to level III and level IV offenders. As is frequently the case in such settings, a rigid behavioral regimen was assumed, not unlike a cross between Reality Therapy ala Glasser (1965) and the Ventura School where he grounded much of his book by the same name and a standard token economy wherein chips were awarded for residents when they evinced a target behavior. This practitioner was steeped in Humanistic philosophy with a strong bias toward person-centered techniques. She made a reasonably smooth transition to becoming a behavior modifier with one noteable exception: whenever a resident failed to emit a targeted response or behaved in an unacceptable manner, she withheld the chip and expressed her disappointment and sorrow at the resident's having to miss out on the reinforcer. For some reason, unknown to her, she was getting very unsystematic results form her charges. Mixing contingency management through token economy and Humanistic expressions of concern for the client created big time secondary gains.

The second example is of a practitioner who was skilled at identifying and challenging illogical self-talk. He did an excellent job of challenging and confronting his depressed client, bringing the client to a near functional affective state. This was followed by the question, "How are you feeling now?", wherewith the client, reminded of his misery, climbed right back into his depression. Aside from the foolishness implicit in expecting an affective response from the "How are you feeling?" lead, it violated the context of a cognitive restructuring technique and destroyed the gains achieved by good employment of that technique.

There is a popular text on counseling theory written by Corey (1977) which serves as a graphic demonstration of the weakness of eclecticism. Very carefully stated aspects that are unique to proponents of various theoretical positions, the unique dynamics that make them different from one another and effective in their own right, are discounted in the author's evaluation and supplanted by a lukewarm support for those dynamics that are of little difference from other positions. It is like extolling the virtues of bran cereal and then ignoring the specific qualities that make it healthful in favor of cream of wheat, which is not likely to irritate anybody. If your goal is to avoid irritating anybody, then eclecticism will suit you fine. If your goal is to perform effective and efficient therapy, then some theory-based approach, any theory-based approach is superior.

Perhaps a major and cogent concern for having a theory base is the call by society and by many of our colleagues in the profession for accountability. A theory base provides a framework in which clients may be assessed and on which logically defensed interventions may be based.

There still exists a dilemma relative to client-therapy fit. The dilemma may be stated as, "How can I have a strong theoretical position and still be responsive to a variety of clients, not all of whom fit well into a prescribed theoretical context? Is not a flexible position superior, one where I can use whatever techniques seem to fit at the moment?"

The second premise is grounded in the Gestalt maxim that the "figure takes its meaning from the ground." Words out of context carry deficit or surplus meaning. Techniques out of their theoretical context are either weak or harmful and if used in an inappropriate context, are counterproductive; the whole notion of secondary gain or of inadvertant reinforcement speaks to this principle.

Eclecticism values flexibility over substance. The American College Dictionary includes this definition of eclectic:

> "adjective 1. selecting; choosing from various sources. 2. made up of what is selected from diverse sources. 3. not following any one system, as of philosophy, medicine, etc., but selecting and using whatever is considered best in all systems."

Based on the first two premises, eclecticism as it is defined precisely, is not an acceptable option. Again comes the dilemma, "How can I be effective, as only possible with a strong theoretical grounding, and still be responsive to the needs of a variety of clients?"

For me the resolution is to reframe the dilemma from a dichotomy to an integration. I choose not to be either directive or non-directive, behaviorist or Gestalt, systemic or non-systemic. I choose not to be an amalgamation of pieces taken from several or all positions. I choose instead to be, alternately, a purist in several positions; after using universally effective skills to identify my client's circumstance and unique coping style, I will adopt that therapeutic frame that is most responsive to that client and I will do it in a theory-pure, non-eclectically-diluted fashion. This may be similar in intent to positions with various labels such as "systematic eclecticism" (Hershenson, Power, & Seligman, 1989) or "intensional counseling" (Ivey and Rigazio-DiGilio, 1991). This requires being grounded in several approaches. I profess and encourage students to practice one model from each of four areas: cognitive, affective, behavioral, and psychodynamic.

The third premise requires an evaluative or diagnostic phase -- not in the medical model, DSM-IIIr mediated, arrive at a label and treat the label fashion -- but one based on Rollo May's edict, "Technique follows understanding." The unique interplay of the client's habitual framing style or problem-solving style or life style with the unique set of circumstances in which whatever the client is doing, by definition, is not working or he or she would not be a client, sets up the phenomenal context for therapy. Either the client needs help in reframing the circumstance to fit his or her style or the client needs help in learning and using a different method for coping with the circumstance. In order to ground this proposition in experience, one has only to visualize or remember the inefficiency of trying to think oneself (cognitive style) out of a nagging habit (behavioral problem). A simple triadic model suggests that problems or circumstances come in three varieties: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Likewise, client

style might be categorized by the same three labels. Presume further that popular therapy methods tend to be especially responsive to one of those categories. Logically, cognitive therapies most efficiently address cognitive circumstances and are most readily understood and accepted by clients with a cognitive style. (Parenthetically, I am intrigued at the the focus of Ellis's RET approach to emotion when it is much more parsimoniously applied to cognitive surpluses or deficits.) Similarly, affective strategies address circumstances involving affective dysfunction and feel better to a person who operates more intuitively than cognitively. For a client who acts as though he or she is helpless to behave differently because of an external locus of control, behavioral techniques are likely to create situationally mediated change more quickly and effectively than other approaches. If I can identify correctly my client's circumstance and style, then I can choose the approach that seems most likely to produce the most efficient and effective solution and I can employ it in its strongest form, grounded theoretically and separated from counter-productive, ancillary approaches.

Responsive Therapy

Responsive Therapy (Gerber, 1986) asserts two phases to therapy. the first, lasting up to three sessions consists of employing what is referred to as universal therapy skills or Sequential Initiating, Tracking, and Enhancing skills. These are the Indirect Lead, Paraphrase, Reflection, Pacing skills of common knowledge plus others such as Traffic Signs, Structure of Content, and Description of Situation which are uniquely specified. Effective use of SITE skills allows a therapist, and the client, to arrive at an understanding of client's circumstance and style with an emphasis on exploring the client's phenomenal space. Once the circumstance and style are known, a soft contract is accomplished which restructures the counselor's role from empathic listener to that of an agent of active intervention. The therapist becomes a cognitivist or a behaviorist or an affectivist or a Gestaltist in accordance with the unique attributes of the client style and circumstance.

Are there exceptions to this rule? Yes, certainly. Are some clients hard to fit into specific problem-solving frames? Yes, certainly. Do some clients show mixtures of circumstance and style? Yes, certainly. And having some base rule is better than having none. Therapy remains an advanced art form; any position or rule may be judiciously broken. Operating from four theory bases -- cognitive, affective, behavioral, psychodynamic -- provides selection of a base that more nearly answers the client's needs, one which will require fewer exceptions and less deviation than operating from a less responsive base.

Personal Commitment

Applying the integrational perspective to personality theories is much more difficult than with therapeutic theories. One text (Maddi, 1968) divides personality theories into three categories:

Conflict	Fulfillment	Consistency
Freud	Rogers	Kelly
Murray	Maslow	McClelland
Sullivan	Adler	
Rank	Allport	
	Fromm	

Assume for a moment that each and all of the theorists are telling the truth, that each theorety correctly identifies personality dynamics. Assume further that each theorist sampled a different population from which he or she drew accurate conclusions. It is possible, to the extent that the assumptions hold, that all personality theories are useful in explaining people, and that different people fit selectively into different theorietical explanations. We can save ourselves time and energy by ceasing to defend our favorite against all others and look for applications of each, or maybe find a bigger frame into which all will fit.

While I'm comfortable in asserting the the Responsive Therapy Frame will accomodate all counseling and mental health theories, I am less comfortable making a similar assertion for Personal Commitment. For now, consider it as an example of integrating several seemingly discordant positions into a larger, consonant one.

The word commitment is a label for a construct that has few universally accepted referents. In other words, there are almost as many meanings as there are people who use the term. Ruling out the uses of the term that refer to assignment to a mental health care facility or a prison and those which connote force or external restriction, such as legal contractual commitments, it is still difficult to identify a universal meaning.

I have an uncle whose wife became an invalid relatively early in their married life. For well over a decade he nurtured her -- prepared food, took care of her personal hygiene, supported her through long periods of emotional turmoil. Many people greatly admired his strength, persistence, and outwardly pleasant attitude. His behavior was indeed heroic -- strength in adversity. Similarly I have a cousin whose husband received a broken spine in a construction accident. He survived the accident and subsequent hospitalization to emerge as an embittered quadraplegic. She stayed by his side through years of struggle, often the target of his frustration. Hers, too, was a heroic and admirable performance. Were my uncle and cousin committed? I believe that their experiences would fit under some definitions of the term. It is possible that, although their circumstances were similar, their commitment was different. Perhaps one showed a commitment of love to a treasured partner. Maybe there was a commitment to the institution of marriage. Possibly the commitment was to the opportunity/responsibility of caring for the infirm or less fortunate.

I have two sons, both of whom devoted two years at the prime of their youth to missionary service in distant, less developed countries. Theirs were sacrifices of money, postponement of education, deprivation of social experiences so important to people of that age. Were they committed? Many people would say so. Was their commitment identical? Possibly, but not necessarily. One might have felt a spiritual "call" from diety, another a cultural service motive. Maybe the commitment was to a family tradition or to fulfilling a parental expectation. Maybe the commitment was to maximizing personal experience and maturity or to adventure -- a commitment to self? It is difficult to know the level or kind of commitment through a mere statement of an activity. It would be helpful to know how, or with what kind of style, these people lived their experiences.

Without laboring the definition(s) of commitment, let's consider the probability that there are different <u>kinds</u>, <u>degrees</u>, and <u>directions</u> of commitment, that the term commitment is plural rather than singular. It is possible, then, to be intensely or moderately committed to an idea or dream, to a cause, to a country, to a principle, to God, even to self. The kind or quality of

commitment through the full range of intensity and across the entire spectrum of objects of commitment is a product of the person, his/her value structure, environment, and life style. It is to the kinds of commitment that the following model is addressed.

There are four parts to the Personal Commitment model, each representing a qualitatively different reason for behavior. The first represents what is probably a near absence of commitment or, perhaps, a primitive commitment to emotional self-preservation. It is best described by the concept of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975). Overt behavior is limited or severely restricted. Emotional response is avoided or suppressed. The pattern is one of clinical depression. "My actions will be futile, so I won't take any action at all." The self-preservation nature of this position is that it's better to expect nothing and be correct in my expectation than to believe that I will be successful in my efforts and be disappointed. The theoretical importance of the self-preservation segment in this context is that it represents a reference point, a lowest common denominator, against which other types of commitment can be compared.

The second type to be considered is reactional or other-directed behavior. This is evidenced by an extreme sensitivity to social situations. Fitting in, doing the "right things", and avoidance of unacceptable or gauche behavior describes the objective for people who operate within this style. The structure or direction exists in the environment. The person is sensitive and reactive to cues for propriety which are communicated by the environment. Situational ethics provide the value base for this type of commitment. The ultimate in other-directeness is to be flexible enough to satisfy the expectations of a frequently changing environment. Such adaptability precludes any kind of internal consistency, hence this type is also addressed by the label, empty people.

Third is a style of response labelled conditioned commitment. Based on influence early in life, this type of person shows incredible persistence and goal directedness. Many of the world's great achievers behave as though they were scripted or programmed for one purpose in life. The corporate clones which Gail Sheehy addresses in Passages (1976), the Mozarts and Joan of arcs of the world, all represent high intensity, conditioned commitment. The model of transactional analysis (Berne, 1961) will serve well to elucidate this style, in particular the references to parental ego states which direct the behavior of some people. To a certain extent, conditioned commitment is an other-directed style. The impetus and direction come from outside the person; however, they are implanted deeply into the value and motivational systems so that there is a very high degree of internal consistency and inflexibility in the behavior of the person. That the response set is free from immediate environmental influence can be seen, for example, in frequent encounters with people who are ensnared in attempts to please a parent, even though that parent is long since deceased.

Personal commitment is marked by behavior that has a unifying theme or style, but which is selectively variable. There is a well-developed internal system, but it is in process and open to selective modification. The personally committed person shows neither the chamelion adaptability of the other-directed nor the inflexibility of the conditioned style. Personal responsibility and decision, a process orientation, marks personal commitment. This person believes in choice, uses opportunities to choose, and accepts responsibility for the choices made. The position is best elucidated in Responsive Therapy: a Systematic Approach to Counseling Skills (Gerber, 1986).

There are numerous statements on psychology which suggest that we expose our personality or motives or character or self through our every action. Tolman (Sahakian, W., 1986) said that all behavior is purposeful. Moreover, according to Combs and Soper (1963), all behavior is a sincere attempt to serve the actor. They said that people do the best they can according to their perceptions of their circumstances. This does not mean that all behavior is good or that it is successful, only that it is the best possible for that person at that time from his/her frame of reference.

Perhaps the theorist who devoted the most attention to behavioral indicators of personality was Alfred Adler (Ansbacher, H. and Ansbacher, R., 1904). He believed that life style is estabilished at a very early age and that it repeats itself in virtually every activity or experience the person has. The family constellation and the person's unique position within it cause an individual to adopt a life style by which he or she gains power and gratification. One simplified system for explaining life styles or scripts was to see everybody as following one of three roles; persecutor, victim, or rescuer -- people who make things happen, people to whom things happen, and people who rectify the results of happenings (Karpman, S., 1930). Adler's styles, a little more complex in nature, described a general pattern of conformity and achievement by the oldest child, social orientation of the second child, physical or athletic prowess of the third child, and political style of the youngest child who finds other options already taken and so must play people against one another to gain position and gratification.

The attempt for this segment and for a larger, unpublished manuscript, Personal Commitment, was made to elicit data in four forms. The people were asked to relate (1) a specific experience in which they behaved typically, (2) the earliest memory they can recall, (3) the synopsis of a dream, and (4) a description of their parents and/or other influential people of their developing years and the expectations these people had of them. The rationale behind this approach is that style shows in all behavior, a variety of samples is helpful in drawing conclusions, and the process of sampling rather large pieces of behavior reduces the chance of interviewer bias in the selection of data. For example and in response to the indirect lead, "Tell me an experience which is typical of you or that can give me an idea of how you operate," the following is a response from Mr. Park Bong Jong, a university student who served as my research assistant in Korea: "I invited two friends over last night. One is a good friend and also an assistant in the Education office. He has control of the funds for a project for the Educational Festival in October. The other person is a senior in Education who helps me from time to time. There is a problem in that the assistant does not want to give enough funds for the project. I tried to see his side, and be friendly, and at the same time get him to release more money. My style is to try to solve problems peaceably, but we ended up fighting. I relate to that person now in two ways: I like him as a friend, but I don't like him as an uncooperative administrator."

From his behavioral anecdote, two reasonable hypotheses can be made about Mr. Park's style. The first is that he is a rescuer, programmed to seek solutions to problems by taking the initiative. The second is that he is a victim, conditioned or maybe just other-directed, who was compelled by the situation to engage in a contest where he was in a power-weak position. If you add to his behavioral anecdote some biographical information, one of the hypotheses may be favored over the other. Mr. Park is a pleasant-appearing university junior who says "sir" very often. He is cooperative and eager to please. His father is 65 years old. He lives at home with his parents and is the youngest of six children. His major in Education was strongly

influenced by an older brother, who teaches high school and is the economic support for the family. Based on Adler's notion of script being tied to birth order, Mr. Park is definitely in the "politician" slot, being power-weak and having to manipulate others. This data supports the notion of conditioned commitment but does not resolve the rescuer or victim issue.

In response to the indirect lead, "Share with me your earliest memory," Bong Jong related the following: "I was in the fifth grade. My father moved from our home in a rural village in the south to Seoul. It was necessary for him to move to find work in order to support the family. Only my mother and I went with him. He had a hard time finding a job, resorting to selling our few possessions and doing low-classed jobs. I was an outcast in school because I was poor. I wouldn't get friends, and so felt very bad for myself." If anything is critically important for a last child in the birth order/politician, it is friends, for they and their influence are the commerce of politics. In this memory we see a definite support for a victim script.

When asked to relate a dream, Bong Jong Park gave the following account of a dream he had the previous night,following his meeting with the two friends: "I was in the mountains, hunting. I saw game in a large wild field, but could not get it. I crossed a river at the edge of the field, encountered a large animal which grabbed me by the throat -- and I woke up."

There is enough parallelism in the dream and the behavioral anecdote to suggest a relationship between the two. "I started after something. It eluded me. It turned on me." Certainly the dream loads heavily on the victim nature of Mr. Park's script. Lest the reader overrespond to the label, victim, a person with a victim script does not walk through life wearing a sign on his/her back saying "Kick me!" He or she shows a tendency to engage in circumstances from a power-weak position or with incomplete or inadequate preparation which results, often, in the opportunity to be rescued. The outcome frequently is a result of whether or not the "other player" is a persecutor or a rescuer. A liason between a victim and a rescuer has to be a complimentary one, with a high probability of satisfaction to both.

The remaining type of information requested in the interviews of contemporaries included a description of father and of mother plus a statement about parental expectations. Sometimes another person was highly influential, so that was sampled also. In Park Bong Jong's information he described his father as having been a blue-collar worker in a low wage job. Most of his siblings (except one brother) had to enter the work force upon graduation from high school. He is the parent's last hope for an impressive career; in their communication to him, that means business or law in which he will make a lot of money. The older brother, the high school teacher, modeled success in teaching and this influenced Bong Jong to enter the school of education. Even though he is ascribing to a program that is professional and a big step up from his parents, he is not quite okay. The early establishment and the high degree of consistency in experiential patterns establishes Mr. Park as having a <u>conditioned-commitment</u> style.

The analysis of fictional and historical characters according to their style of commitment lends a new dimension, a life-identity to their study. Consider as an example the classic, <u>The Scarlet Letter</u> (Hawthorne, N., 1930), wherein we read the stories of three other-directed people. Hester Prynne, who draws much attention because of bearing the fanciful and dread letter "A" for adulteress, is easy to identify with as a result of most of us having felt shame and ridicule (or the fantasy thereof) from some action deemed inappropriate. Hers were the reactions first of marrying, while very young, a man much older than herself and who was

physically misshapen and elicited no love from her, because he wanted her to. In his words when confronting her regarding the betrayal of her marriage trust, "We have wronged each other. Mine was the first wrong, when I betrayed thy budding youth into a false and unnatural relation with my decay" (Hawthorne, N., 1930, p.78).

Her second reaction to circumstance came as a result of being sent from Amsterdam in advance of her husband, Roger Chillingworth, who remained behind to settle some business concerns. His delay lengthened into months, then years during which time Hester was somewhat naturally and unwittingly drawn into a friendship, then love, then sexual relationship with one of Boston's most respected and trustworthy men, the Reverend Mr. Arthur Dimmesdale. The third reaction to circumstance came at the time of her judgment and sentence, and continued until the end of the saga. That was her silence in protection of her lover and her aloof but proud reaction to the community. The circumstance at the sentencing is most powerful when the respected Mr. Dimmesdale is manipulated into exhorting Hester to name her partner.

"Good Master Dimmesdale," said (Governor Bellingham), "the responsibility of this woman's soul lies greatly with you. It behooves you, therefore, to exhort her to repentence, and to confession, as a proof and consequence thereof" (Hawthorne, N., 1930, p70).

"Hester Prynne," said he (Dimmesdale), leaning over the balcony and looking down steadfastly into her eyes, "thou hearest what this good man says, and seest the accountability under which I labor. If thou feelest it to be for thy soul's peace, and that thy earthly punishment will thereby be made more effectual to salvation, I charge thee to speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer! Be not silent from any mistaken pity and tenderness for him; for, believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on a pedestal of shame, yet better were it so than to hide a guilty heart through life" (Hawthorne, N., 1930, pp71-72).

Roger Chillingworth, Hester's husband, also reacted to circumstance when, upon his arrival in Boston and the realization of what had occurred, he hid his identity from the pity of the throng and adopted a vengeance motive. Even after realizing Mr. Dimmesdale's complicity, he avoided the public torment of "wronged man," who by association shares responsibility and guilt, and continued to enjoy Dimmesdale's plight. He even aggravated Mr. Dimmesdale's condition by prescribing "medicines" which undermined an already frail health.

While Hester Prynne and Roger Chillingworth both fit the dynamics of other-directedness, Arthur Dimmesdale's case is a starker representation. Here was a man of the church, pillar of the community, established in a role and with a public performance of that role so practiced as to escape suspicion. In fact, his role was so important that the townspeople could ill afford to destroy it by attending to the rather obvious actions which allowed Chillingworth to deduce his guilt. Arthur was also, in addition to being a great performer in the role of minister, an incredibly weak and sensitive man. That he should be attracted to Hester was neither weak nor unnatural. That he engaged her sexually was probably out of weakness and not an unwittingly blind act. He shows too much self-awareness in other regards to believe that his was an unawares complicity. He probably said to himself and to Hester, "I'm sorry. I just couldn't help but do it!"

Hypocrisy and weakness, frequent companions in other-directedness, are evidenced in the continuation of Dimmesdale's earlier exhortation. "What can thy silence do for him (your unnamed partner), except it tempt him -- yea, compel him, as it were -- to add hypopcrisy to sin? Heaven hath granted thee an open ignominy, that thereby thou mayest work out an open

triumph over the evil within thee, and the sorrow without. Take heed how thou deniest to him -- who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it for himself -- the bitter, but wholesome, cup that is now presented to thy lips!" (Hawthorne, N., 1930, p72). In his eloquence, Arthur gave over the power and the responsibility to Hester to confess his own involvement. He knew. He knew the circumstances. He knew the consequences. He knew the dynamics of penitence. He knew the wisdom of confession and atonement. He assigned the responsibility for his destiny, out of weakness and an other-directed style, to someone outside himself.

The remainder of the story discloses the torment, including emotional anguish and physical conversion-hysteria symptoms, which accrued from trying to play to two audiences -- the townspeople who revered their minister, and Hester who exacted his devotion and attention. That he pulled it off with surface success is attested in this quotation near the end of the book: "Thus had come to the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale -- as to most men, in their various spheres, though seldom recognized until they see it far behind them -- an epoch of life more brilliant and full of triumph than any previous one, or than any which could hereafter be. He stood, at this moment, on the very proudest eminence of superiority, to which the gifts of intellect, rich lore, prevailing eloquence, and a reputation of whitest sanctity, could exalt a clergyman in New England's earliest days, when the professional character was of itself a lofty pedestal. Such was the position which the minister occupied, as he bowed his head forward on the cushions of the pulpit, at the close of his Election Sermon. Meanwhile Hester Prynne was standing beside the scaffold of the pillory, with the scarlet letter still burning on her breast" (Hawthorne, N., 1930, p240).

In keeping with his life-style, Arthur Dimmesdale caved in to the tremendous pressure of his hypocracy. Having played out the circumstances to their utmost, he was compelled -- not out of a sudden change of commitment, but out of the forces of his circumstance -- to confess. His death scene is a culmination of forces -- the pressure to set the record straight, as a matter of religious circumstance, "God is merciful! Let me now do the will which He hath made plain before my sight" (Hawthorne, N., 1930, p247); escape from the now recognized plot of Roger Chillingworth; and sorrow for himself and of guilt for allowing Hester to bear the public derision for both their sins. In his last words, and in an attempt to give sense to a nonsensical existence, he assigned to God the credit (or the blame) for his circumstances. "He hath proved His mercy, most of all, in my afflictions. By giving me this burning torture to bear upon my breast! By sending yonder dark and terrible old man, to keep the torture always at red-heat! By bringing me hither, to die this death of triumphant ignominy before the people!" (Hawthorne, N., 1930, p247). Hawthorne, through Dimmesdale's death speech, entones the effort of many people to assign meaning and purpose, outside of themselves, to lives which have been lived through reaction to random or self-initiated circumstances. There indeed were powers acting upon Dimmesdale, but to assign their authorship to God is most irreverent.

Other characters who are seen as being <u>other-directed</u> in commitment include: Father Ralph de Bricassant in <u>The Thornbirds</u> and Don Quixote de la Mancha. Some who fit into the <u>conditioned-commitment</u> category include: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Martin Luther, and Golda Meir. People of <u>personal commitment</u> include: Victor Frankl, Manya Sklodovska (Madame Curie), Sir Thomas Moore, and Henry David Thoreau. Of the latter, some elaboration may illustrate his place in this category. Not particularly successful in social encounters, Thoreau had one serious love which was reciprocated, but the lady's father would not consent to her marrying a trancendentalist, a radical follower of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Although having several friendships, Thoreau never married. Nor did he do many things which might be

expected of him. He selectively avoided involvement in college pranks, yet maintained friendships with student leaders. He did not engage in status seeking practices, yet he was invited to read an honors paper at graduation. He resigned his job teaching school, at a time of economic depression, because he was required to flog students who misbehaved. He was clearly distrustful of science, as too narrowly focused, at a time when being scientific was meritorious. He refused affiliation with several model communities, founded by friends, because he believed that improvement comes through changing the individual, not through institutions.

Even though he believed strongly enough in his way of life, he tended to not push it on others; there were two notable exceptions to this in his active support of starving Irish immigrants and his speaking out against slavery and the poll tax. Individually he avoided paying the poll tax and was jailed briefly, giving rise to an influencial essay, "Civil Disobedience", which also countered the major societal tide of the time.

Being distrustful of the world's professions, Thoreau saw them and the possessions they provide as encumbrances to freedom. Personally, he engaged in several occupations out of necessity and with a sense of hypocrisy and regret. He established a private school, one which emphasized enjoyment in learning and teacher as fellow student, but concluded, "How vain to try to teach youth, or anybody, truths. They can only learn after their own fashion, and when they get ready" (Meltzer, M. and Harding, W., 1912, p44). He was a laborer, a pencil maker of considerable renoun, and a surveyor of high skill and in demand. All of these he endured to provide only the necessary support to experience, write, and grow -- his profession. Several quotations; offered in no particular sequence, provide more insight into this man.

"...be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice" (Paul, 1960, p219).

"Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe" (Paul, 1960, p223).

"Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away" (Paul, 1960, p222).

Probably Thoreau is best known in connection with his work, "Walden", an account of his experiences, thoughts, and reflections of living, by himself and in a self-reliant manner in the woods near the banks of Walden Pond. That Thoreau went to the woods could be written off as either a reaction to the people and conditions which surrounded him, as an other-directed escape from society, or it could be seen as conditioned, largely by his mentor's influence in writing about nature; e.g., "the life in nature was the ever-present spirit of God" (Paul, 1960, pxv). Thoreau said, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived" (Meltzer and Harding, 1912, p154). This could be rationalization on his part; however, the successes he enjoyed as chronicled in "Walden" would suggest extending his tenure at the pond beyond the two years and two months that he stayed. That he left the woods is validation for a style of personal commitment and support for his intentional move toward Walden Pond as opposed to away from society. In his words, "I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-

side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear, that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight and the mountains. I do not wish to go below now" (Paul, 1960, 220).

It can be said that a certain amount of discomfort is necessary to provoke learning and change. Thoreau, time and again, removed himself from what he had mastered or grown accustomed to, and put himself, intentionally, into a new setting. There is a certain unpredictable nature to the Thoreaus of the world, yet an integrative theme or style that ties together their actions and experiences. Not often among the "heroes" of an achievement-worship ethic such as permeates Western society, the Personally Commited march to their own drummer, onward to a generally higher level of existence than others.

Whether the model is applied to living contemporaries like Park bong Jong, fictional characters such as Arthur Dimmesdale, or historical figures like Thoreau, there is instructive value in measuring them on the yardstick of the Personal Commitment Model. A major Gestalt principle states that meaning occurs in context. This is certainly true in understanding the actions of self-preservation, other-directed commitment, and conditioned commitment. In the case of personal commitment, people so inclined become partners with their context and transcend the bounds of merely reacting. There is much focus in the psychological literature on locus of control. The power of action or explanation for action resides outside of a person (external locus) or within a person (internal locus). Self-direction is an ensign of the Third Force, an enigma to the behaviorists, and fantasy to the psychoanalysts. For years there has been active debate among these three positions, each vying for a franchise on the truth. The Personal Commitment model gives them each a home on the same street because there are people who behave in such a way as to validate each. None are exclusively "true"; all are "true". Dichotomizing or trichotomizing are passé; integrational models are closer representations of a complex reality.

Teachers, therapists, and consultants have the opportunity, perhaps the responsibility, to frame literature and history according to a multi-faceted truth and to promote self-responsibility among clients and students. The Personal Commitment model is one such vehicle by which to accomplish this goal.

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